

# The Civic Engagement Times

JULY/AUGUST 2008

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

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## *A Message from the Governor*

Summer in Massachusetts is the perfect time of year for renewing our commitment to Civic Engagement. Long daylight hours, warmer weather and summer vacations make it easier to become more active in our communities through volunteerism and social awareness. I have had two recent opportunities to renew my own commitment to grassroots engagement. Through the Readiness Project, hundreds of deeply committed and talented individuals joined with me to develop our Education Action Agenda, a blueprint to prepare our children to succeed in a 21st century global economy. In another example of civic engagement, I joined more than 1,500 volunteers in May to clean up our state parks for the summer season.



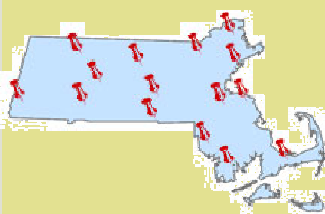
Our efforts to engage even more citizens in local communities are yielding positive results, but much work remains to be done. This summer, to continue that progress, I am hosting a series of town hall meetings across the Commonwealth, giving me a chance to hear directly from residents on the issues you care about most. I encourage you to participate.

I hope this second issue of The Civic Engagement Times inspires you to join us in moving Massachusetts forward.

## CHECK IT OUT!

### Town Hall Meetings

[www.mass.gov/governor/townhall](http://www.mass.gov/governor/townhall)



- July 8: Salem
- July 10: Hull
- July 16: Amesbury
- July 17: Holyoke
- July 21: Milton
- July 23: Webster
- July 29: Rehoboth
- July 30: Athol
- August 5: Great Barrington
- August 11: Hyannis
- August 23: Boston

Check [the web site](http://www.mass.gov/governor/townhall) for exact times and locations.

## *2010 Budget Hearings: Civic Engagement and Results*

Fiscal Year 2009 has just begun, but this summer we are already looking ahead to the Governor's Fiscal 2010 budget recommendation.

The budget development process provides a valuable opportunity to engage with citizens and constituent groups about the many programs they care about so passionately. Consistent with the Governor's emphasis on promoting citizen involvement, budget hearings will look different this year, emphasizing program results and public participation.

The Patrick administration is directing each Secretariat to go beyond the minimum legal requirements by holding

at least two budget hearings, with at least one hearing outside the Boston area and after 5 p.m. so that more people will be able to participate.

Each hearing will begin with a short introductory presentation by the Secretary or senior staff. These presentations will include an overview of the Secretariat and its agencies' missions and activities, a summary of last year's spending, a synopsis of major program results, and a brief outline of the needs and priorities for the coming year. Hearings will then be open for testimony from attendees. Presentations will also be available online for those who cannot

attend the hearings.

As we face continued uncertainty about the economy and prepare for another challenging budget year, focusing on results provides a foundation for a productive conversation about how the Commonwealth's limited resources should be invested. At this year's budget hearings, we look forward to sharing data about the results our programs are achieving, and engaging with the public about how our state budget might be allocated to improve those results in the future.



#### Energy Conservation Advice

- Use fluorescent bulbs in lieu of incandescent bulbs. Fluorescent bulbs last up to ten times longer, and will save you about \$30 over their lifespan.
- Change your air filter at least every 3 months. A clogged air filter will reduce air flow, forcing your system to use more energy for the same purpose. It can also cause system failure, leading to expensive maintenance or replacement costs.
- For all new appliances, select an Energy Star model, which will use between 10% and 50% less water or electricity.

## Save Energy and Money This Summer

Amid the headlines about rising energy costs, it is important to consider different ways in which we can work to reduce consumption of electricity and gasoline. Governor Patrick recently signed an energy bill to promote efficiency and the use of renewable resources. The legislation creates a greener future for Massachusetts, but there are numerous measures homeowners and businesses can take to lower their energy costs today.

Approximately one-seventh of all electricity generated in the United States is used for air conditioning buildings, and about half of the energy you use in your home is for heating and cooling. An Energy Star air conditioner will use at least 10% less electricity than a conventional model, and will come with an adjustable thermostat or

timer. Using a programmable thermostat can save you approximately \$200 each year on energy bills, especially if you adjust it for when you are out during the day or asleep. Another low-cost alternative to air conditioning is using ceiling fans and opening windows to allow cross-ventilation. Fans use a fraction of the electricity of air conditioners, and proper ventilation reduces indoor air pollution while making your home more comfortable.

While gasoline prices are at record highs, changing how you drive can reduce your expenses. Speeding and rapid acceleration and braking wastes fuel. With fuel economy benefits of 5% to 33%, and equivalent gas savings of 19¢ to \$1.26 per gallon, it may be worthwhile to reconsider how you drive. Reduce the time you spend

idling, use the air conditioner less frequently, make sure your tires are inflated properly, practice routine maintenance, and if you are considering buying a new car, buy the most efficient vehicle for your needs.

Sealing drafts in your home, particularly in ducts for heating or cooling, can save a significant amount of energy. Ducts which run through crawl spaces, basements, attics, and garages can have costly leaks, and sealing them can save you up to 20% on your energy bills. Windows and exterior walls are also problem areas, so if your energy costs are too high, investigate drafty areas. If your heating system is not performing efficiently, consider replacing it. Doing so can save you 25% in fuel costs, keeping your bills consistent even as prices rise.



Above: Secretary of Health and Human Services JudyAnn Bigby prepares a meal at Community Servings.

Below: Secretary of Administration and Finance Leslie Kirwan, second from right, poses after volunteering at the Greater Boston Food Bank.



## State Employees Responding as Volunteers

Every day, the lives of residents across Massachusetts are impacted by their government and the dedicated state employees that work in public service. In that spirit, one of Governor Patrick's first Executive Orders aimed to enhance and promote yet another opportunity for state employees to lead by example and rebuild our sense of community through volunteerism.

The State Employees Responding as Volunteers (or SERV) Program provides eligible state employees from Pittsfield to Provincetown the opportunity to volunteer up to eight hours per month at approved organizations ranging in scope from education and mentoring, to health and human services, to public safety and the environment.

Since January of 2007 Executive Branch state employees have volunteered over 27,000 hours at food banks, public schools, hospitals, mentoring organizations, and a host of other municipal and non-profit entities that provide needed services to communities across our Commonwealth. Most recently, Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. JudyAnn Bigby and a contingent of ten employees from the 17 agencies under her supervision visited Community Servings, a non-profit organization in Jamaica Plain that is dedicated to providing free home-delivered meals throughout eastern Massachusetts to people homebound with HIV/AIDS and other acute life-threatening illnesses. Secre-

tary Bigby plans to volunteer quarterly with ten exceptional employees nominated by their agency heads.

Of her experiences at Community Servings, Secretary Bigby explained that, "through the SERV program, our EOHHS team prepared meals to be delivered to critically ill individuals through Community Servings. In just three hours, we worked as a team to prepare more than 600 meals. We knew we were making a real difference, and everyone was moved to do more for such a wonderful organization."

For information on how to get involved in organizations throughout Massachusetts, please visit [www.mass.gov/serv](http://www.mass.gov/serv).

## Access to Service

DTA's Office of Strategic Development and Community Relations works to make services more accessible to Massachusetts families.

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life. Located within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department ensures the emergency and transitional needs of the individuals and families of the Commonwealth are met through a combination of federal- and state-funded programs. Massachusetts has a comprehensive system of programs and supports for individuals and families in need in order to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency.

In July 2007, Commissioner Julia Kehoe developed the Strategic Development and Community Relations (SDCR) division, which works to fulfill the agency's mission and engage and inform constituents of any program and policy developments that occur within the DTA. Leading this grassroots form of commu-

nity relations is Assistant Commissioner Georgianna Melendez, who came to the Administration from Casa Myrna Vazquez, an organization that focuses on ending domestic violence and helping women and children through advocacy, prevention, and intervention.

DTA uses innovative approaches to reach out to Massachusetts residents in need of its services. With 26 Transitional Assistance Offices in 25 locations across the Commonwealth, the Department identified the need to expand access to vital services and supports. This spring, DTA partnered with municipalities, non-profit organizations, hospitals, community health centers and senior centers to open four full-service satellite offices in Northampton, Athol, Waltham and Somerville, and six food stamp outreach centers in Boston, Lynn, Chelsea and Fall River. These locations offer people the opportunity to meet one-on-one with experienced DTA workers and learn more about key programs and apply for benefits on a regular basis. In addition to increasing access to critical supports, these partnerships allow DTA to

more comprehensively and effectively serve all of its clients, particularly elders and people with disabilities or significant medical issues.

The number of Massachusetts residents who are eligible for the Department's services, especially those in elderly and immigrant populations, exceeds the number of residents enrolled in DTA programs. The Department is committed to expanding access to programs and services by developing innovative partnerships within the community, in order to bring government services directly to constituent communities. This enables the Department to foster civic engagement and private/public partnerships between Massachusetts residents, their local organizations, and the Patrick Administration.

To find out more about the services and locations provided by DTA, their Full Service Satellite Locations or Food Stamp Outreach Centers, please visit [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta).

## BY THE NUMBERS

Massachusetts cities and towns: 351

Cities and towns represented in Patrick Administration board appointments: 208

Cities and towns visited by Governor Patrick: 133

Population of Massachusetts: 6.4 Million

Comments and suggestions collected from constituents: 70,282

Number of clicks it takes to access the feedback form on the Governor's web site: 1

## Seniors and Civic Engagement

Massachusetts recently won a competitive application process to participate in a National Governor's Association Policy Academy entitled "Improving the Civic Engagement of Seniors Initiative." The goal of this multi-year initiative is to improve the health and lives of older Americans by substantially increasing the proportion of seniors who participate in

employment, education and training, or meaningful volunteer activities. Secretary of Elder Affairs Michael Festa will lead the Massachusetts team.

*Right:* Governor Patrick gathers feedback from constituents.



## From the Executive Branch and Across the Commonwealth

Public events being hosted by the Executive Offices include:

### Views from the Town Hall Tour



Salem, July 8



Hull, July 10



Amesbury, July 16

### TALK OF THE TOWN

Frequently asked-about subjects from the town hall meetings:

1. Education
2. Energy and the Environment
3. Health and Human Services
4. Business and Economic Development
5. Transportation

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

#### Operational Services Division

Businesses interested in obtaining statewide contracts are invited to participate to the [Pathways to Procurement Workshop](#).

**August 6**—Hampden County

[Pathways to Procurement](#)

#### Affirmative Market Program

The Affirmative Market Program is hosting a series of workshops designed to educate participants in the AMP and how best it can be applied at the individual and business level.

**July 24–August 28**—Operational Services Division, 1 Ashburton Place, 10th floor, Room 1017, Boston

For additional information about this and other events, visit: [www.mass.gov/amp](http://www.mass.gov/amp)

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

#### Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Citizens are invited to share their comments and concerns at the following public meetings

#### Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA

**July 23**— 10 Park Plaza, State Transportation Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Boston, 1–3:30 p.m.

#### Discussion of Design of The Blue Hill Avenue Station

**August 5**—Mildred Avenue Community Center, 5 Mildred Ave., Mattapan, 6:30–8 p.m.

For additional information about these and other public meetings, visit:

[www.mbta.com/about-the-mbta/public-meetings/](http://www.mbta.com/about-the-mbta/public-meetings/)

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

#### Water Resources Commission

Commission meetings are generally held once per month.

**August 21**—100 Cambridge Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, 1–4 p.m.

[www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/default.htm](http://www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/default.htm)

#### MassWildlife

**August 28**—Fisheries & Wildlife Board Meeting and Public Hearing, Newburyport- Elks Lodge, 25 Low Street Meeting time: 1 p.m. Hearing time: 7 p.m.

Relative to establishing seasons and bag limits for the 2008-2009 migratory bird seasons. Public comment about the migratory bird regulations is invited. The Board will vote on seasons and bag limits immediately following this hearing.

#### DCR Stewardship Council

The Stewardship Council works with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide a safe, accessible, well-maintained, and well-managed system of open spaces and recreational facilities.

**August 7**—Spectacle Island, 7 p.m.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship-council.htm>

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT

#### One-Stop Career Centers

**July 29**—Briefing about Federal, State and City Jobs. Boston, 10 a.m. Registration: 617.338.0809 x 215

[www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

Keywords: One Stop Career

### GOVERNOR'S CABINET MEETING SCHEDULE

July 17: Amherst, 2 p.m.

July 22: Lowell, 9 p.m.

July 29: New Bedford, TBD

July 30: Worcester, 3 p.m.

Please see [www.mass.gov/governor/townhall](http://www.mass.gov/governor/townhall) for details.

### SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 18

#### Massachusetts Career Day

Sponsored by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Statewide job fair held to highlight the work of the state's 37 One Stop Career Centers.

Please visit [www.mass.gov/eolwd](http://www.mass.gov/eolwd) for information about fair locations in your area.